

WASHINGTON DC -- A provision added in the House Budget Committee last week by Wisconsin Reps. Gwen Moore and Paul Ryan will reach the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives this evening as part of a larger budget bill. The amendment, one of only three adopted on a bipartisan basis late Wednesday night, amended the House Budget Resolution to call on Congress to restore cuts made in 2006 to child support enforcement funds and to restore the ability of states like Wisconsin to continue passing on every cent of child support payments to families.

Debate will begin on the House Budget Resolution, H.Con.Res. 99, this evening and will continue into Thursday.

“This language sends a bipartisan signal that Congress needs to act on this. This is a moral issue. We know that when states like Wisconsin are allowed to pass on all child support to the families that so desperately need it, the children win. But our measure is also common sense since non-custodial parents--most of whom are fathers--are more likely to pay child support when they know the money will be used directly for their children, instead of for administrative expenses,” Moore said. “And unless we also restore cuts made to local child support enforcement efforts, Milwaukee County estimates that in our area alone, child support collections next year could fall by as much as \$47 million.”

Ryan and Moore teamed up to support this “Sense of Congress” language urging Congress to take action to ensure that states have the necessary resources to collect all child support that is owed to families. States and localities use federal matching funds to employ thousands of

caseworkers as well as legal, administrative and law enforcement staff to collect overdue child-support payments. Last year this federal child support enforcement funding was cut by \$4.9 billion. Milwaukee alone will see an estimated cut of \$7.7 million in these funds next year, a 48% cut in federal funding to Wisconsin and Milwaukee that County Executive Scott Walker and County Board Chairman Lee Holloway said “will severely curtail staff efforts, leaving child support cases unprocessed, problems uncorrected and support uncollected.”

Their language also called on Congress to enact legislation that would restore the ability of states like Wisconsin to pass on 100% of collected child support payments to the families that need them. For many years, Wisconsin benefited from a federal waiver that enabled the state’s Wisconsin Works program to pass through the full amount of child support payments to custodial parents working their way off welfare. Wisconsin’s program was highly successful with non-custodial parents receiving, on average, \$150 more per month.

However, unless additional legislation is passed, states must now retain a percentage of those child support payments owed to families on federal assistance (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families).

H. Con. Res. 99 is expected to be voted on Thursday.

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